

LA/UE Watershed Sponsor's Meeting Dec 5th, 2008

Attendees

Brooke Anderson – Etowah Water & Sewer Authority
Bob Bourne – Cobb County
Gene Camp – Bartow County/Bartow County Water & Sewer
Rob Daoust – Malcolm Pirnie
Steven Davie - TetraTech
Tom Heard, Cherokee County Water and Sewer Authority
Majorie Hicks-Cherokee County
David Kubala-Cherokee County Water & Sewer Authority
Jerry Jones – Malcolm Pirnie
Geoff Morton – Cherokee County
Mike Morrissey-Cherokee County Water & Sewer Authority
Steve Nestor – Cobb County
Jim Parsons – Cobb County Marietta Water Authority
Tim Perkins- Forsyth County/Forsyth County Water & Sewer
Patrick Pherson – Cobb County Marietta Water Authority
Susan Raines- Kennesaw State Univ
Steve Shelton –Cobb County
Sam Stribling - TetraTech
Lynn Tully- Dawson County
Brian Watson - TetraTech

Summary of Discussions:

1) Meeting with EPD:

Wednesday, Dec 3rd, 2008 Jerry Jones and team met with Liz Booth at EPD to discuss EPD's development of the TMDL for Lake Allatoona and any reciprocal impacts on the work of this group. EPD stated that the sponsors from this group can use this project's data and findings for the purposes of permits. The original agreement was for a 2-year period of agreement between EPD and this group. EPD understands that since the original agreement with the Corps, the lack of continuous federal funding caused a short delay in the sponsors moving the project towards completion. However, the MOA is still in effect, even though more than 2 years have passed.

Draft Lake Allatoona TMDL will be published in January 2009 and data/information from this group may have some influence on the TMDL. This group *may* be able to review the draft TMDL before it goes out for public comment. This group might want to work together to provide feedback to EPD regarding the TMDL, especially in terms of the way the TMDL is presented and the level of flexibility within it. For example, is it a percent reduction of the overall load? Is it broken down by point versus non-point? How will the point

(non-point) sources be assigned assimilative capacity upstream? Are they talking about what is coming out of a plant incrementally (e.g. water quality of the effluent) versus the total assimilative capacity? The latter depends on how clean you can make the increments. Both treatment level (effluent discharge quantitative limit) and total pounds annual of assimilative capacity available to point sources (public wastewater treatment facilities) must be considered. How is the TMDL going to handle future allocations? How can we meet the law for water quality standards for point and non-point? The natural level of algae in the lake will still be there, plus adding in all the other sources. We know that point source is a small percentage of the total load. But a TMDL still has to be written that meets the standard. This creates a practical dilemma for all.

Whatever decisions are issued: This group does not want to be set up for conflicts against one another. We want to have incentives for collaboration not competition.

Action item: Make an appointment with Liz Booth to brainstorm and share ideas and concerns related to:

1. Organizational Implementation of the WPP
2. Discussion of the pending TMDL

Make this appointment for between now and Christmas. Need to bring a small team of sponsor-delegates to this meeting. This group needs to reach consensus on strategy or a list of concerns ahead of the meeting with Liz Booth. Approach it by asking Liz to share her ideas and then have the group have a frank and open discussion about items 1 & 2 above and possible ideas and concerns. We will meet wherever she wants to meet and at her convenience, as soon as possible. This will be a brainstorming, roundtable discussion. No presentation. Designed to gain buy-in. Feedback: Meeting will be at Cobb County-Marietta Board Room at 9am on Friday Dec 12th. Directions will be issued in email. 10 person maximum due to room size and not to overwhelm.

With the Lake Allatoona TMDL, the interim phosphorus strategy can go away. Sponsors will likely have more flexibility to determine how they want to support the TMDL (Point vs. Non-Point reduction)

EPD would like to reschedule a meeting with Dr. Couch to update her on the status of this project. Perhaps in February.

2) Timeline Issues:

- EPD suggests that the sponsors submit the WA before completing the WPP.
- Each document will take approximately 3 months for review by EPD.

- Sponsors will receive the “final” WA on or about January 16th with a 10 day comment period.
- The current timeline has the Watershed Assessment presented to EPD on February 9th.
- The WPP will be submitted to EPD on March 27th

3) Watershed Assessment Update: Sponsor Comments

Comments were of 5 types:

- a) Editorial corrections in grammar and style
Response: addressed.
- b) Inconsistencies in how the data were presented:
Response: New text acknowledges uncertainty of calculation and that additional data may result in changes to these numbers since only 3 years of the 6 year data gathering plan have occurred. Data subsets have been more thoroughly described. There have been some “pullouts” added on individual rivers or watershed areas. You can pull out more detailed information on, for example, the Little River and what flows into it. These are separate documents that add fleshed out details.
- c) Concerns over how analyses were done
Response: More information added, descriptions of methods available.
- d) Concerns that some analyses were not done
Response: New summary data tables have been added with additional information including means, etc.
Feedback from sponsors at meeting: the stormwater and the mean data needs to be separate. Response: It is clear what tables include stormwater in the means as well as separating out stormwater.
- e) Confusion over how conclusions were drawn
Response: Additional text has been added to clarify these issues.

4) Transition from WA to the WPP

- Stressors, stressor sources and biological response indicators are used to help identify what impacts will likely be achieved by specific actions. While this cannot be estimated with 100% certainty, it helps sponsors understand which actions will likely produce the highest level of environmental improvements and/or protections.
- The modeling supports the WPP. Biological Condition gradient takes into account: water quality, sediment, habitat, fish, macroinvertebrates and the impact that stressor sources has on them (e.g. land use, water supply, and wastewater).
- Stepwise multiple regression was used to develop the best fit model for prediction of biological responses.

5) Modeling Update: Brian Watson

- 3 types of models
Watershed model= Loading Simulation C++ (LSPC)
Lake Hydrodynamic Model= Environmental Fluid Dynamics Code (EFDC)
Lake Water Quality Model= Water Quality Analysis Simulation Program (WASP)

Model has been calibrated.

- 6 total Scenarios for WPP have been run, 4 are ready. Each scenario will have a document with it that can be used to formulate the WPPs.

Example:

a) Existing Conditions (as of 2005), using actual data from point sources, chicken manure applications, septic systems, animal counts, etc. 18 watershed locations, years 2001-2007. Includes data from this study as well as data collected earlier. 10 digit HUC level and 5 compliance points within Lake Allatoona.

b) Baseline future land use: Year 2030 land use prediction model. Assumes updated projected wastewater discharges and withdrawals. Assumes no failing septic systems, assumes 10% reduction of pollutant loading in urban land, assumes 10% of urban land as being redeveloped. Any new and redeveloped urban land has to have stormwater BMPs using the GA stormwater manual.

c) Future land use with ag and forest BMPs as more restrictive assumes 5% with no BMPs; 50% with base-level BMPs; 45% with high-level BMPs. Forest BMPs= 10% overall reduction in pollutant loading.

d) Future land use with ag and forest BMPs as less restrictive Assumes 15% with no BMPs; 50% with Base-level BMPs; 35% with high-level BMPs. 5% overall reduction in Forest pollution loading.

- Example, Little River 10-digit HUC.

6) Watershed Protection Plan Update:

- Needs to balance the promotion of sustained economic development; the protection and enhancement of public health and natural systems; and the enhancement of the quality of life of all citizens in the LA/UE Watershed.
- Example of Little River is used to show how the WPP works. Predicted future land uses show significant transition from natural and agricultural land to urban land use. Need to balance recreation and human use with stream protection/water quality and habitat.

- How do we evaluate model-predicted values? *Water Quality criteria*: Are water quality standards being met? *Between subwatersheds*: Do future scenarios represent improvement, degradation or no significant change? What areas have the highest loading? What areas are most in need of protection? *Between model scenarios*: What loading sources are the most important? Which management practices are the most effective?
- For example, on Little River we can look at Fecal Coliform concentrations under current conditions as well as in each of the various future scenarios. So we can see how well the different future BMPs predict the impact on Fecal Coliform (or for other parameters).
- In those areas that are predominantly urban now, the biological changes may be smaller under scenario b/c/d/ because there is no big changes possible in transitions from forest to urban land or agricultural to urban land.
- Economic considerations: The economic breakdown will show which party would most likely absorb the costs of various BMPs (e.g. municipal, developer, or third party). When sponsors discuss recommended actions with EPD, they will be able to discuss various management alternatives by 10 digit HUC.
- The WPP includes a list of short-term measureable goals that will help to meet the long-term measureable objectives.
- **Big Question:** Will this list of about 70 or so BMPs be given as the WPP to EPD? If so, EPD might come back and ask us for a timeline for implementation of all these BMPs? Or, would we submit these as a list of possible BMPs that may be pursued, with individual sponsors or smaller teams of sponsors later submitting proposals to EPD as to which BMPs will be done, when, where and by whom? There needs to be clarification between the sponsors and EPD as to what this WPP means and what it commits (or doesn't commit) the sponsors to. The report will list BMPs at each HUC 10 level.
- The MOA states that the WA is a shared document. The WPP need not be binding to all sponsors equally.
- Brainstorming option:
 - Send the WPP to EPD and say this is the general menu of options that each sponsor or smaller group might later do, in negotiation with EPD.
 - Present EPD with this large WPP but ask them to enforce differently than they have in the past in terms of checking off "tick marks".
 - Will sponsors create their own timelines, budgets and plans for which BMPs from the WPP that will be implemented as negotiated with EPD or will the group work on them together somehow?
 - Keep in mind that the new TMDL will point out non-point sources as a real problem. This will make the group eligible

to apply for 319 funds. It would be better to go after these collectively rather than competing individually.

- There was some general desires expressed among the group to continue to work on a watershed basis for joint benefits if possible, on those issues that impact the whole group.

These are vital questions that will need to be decided upon before the plan is submitted to EPD. Once the group gets together to decide what it wants to ask for in regards to EPD's handling of the WPP, then it makes sense to approach EPD on this. This issue will be added to the discussions with Liz Booth on Friday, December 12th at 9am at Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority.

7) Update on Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement:

Generally the numbers look good.

Sponsors are about 1.5m ahead of the Corps in terms of spending.

8) Agreement with COE:

To close out the agreement with the Corps a letter needs to be drafted that communicates the desire to close out the feasibility cost sharing agreement. All sponsors need to sign the agreement since they signed the original agreement. Work will start on this in early January.

9) Sponsor Wrap Ups:

Next general meeting: February 12th 10 am-1pm Dawson County (lunch included)
Directions to follow via email.

Agenda:

- Discuss Final WA
- FWS wishes to address the group about HCP, discuss ways in which they might be complimentary or impact one another.
- Metro District folks need to be in on that meeting because their plans have a lot of impact on what many of our sponsors do and they should be aware of the WPP progress.